

Council Tax

What you need to know if you receive a final notice



This leaflet contains details on the collection of Council Tax following the issue of a final notice

To check your account details on line (including payments and discounts) please go to www.kingston.gov.uk

Collection of Council Tax

- It is the Council's aim to collect all amounts as they become due.
- The Council's recovery policy has been drawn up in compliance with current regulations but we try to be responsive to individual circumstances.
- Recovery Policy for Council Tax is agreed in advance and ensures that all taxpayers are treated fairly and objectively.

It is important that you contact us immediately if you are experiencing difficulty in paying.

Why are final notices sent?

A final notice is sent because you have not paid in accordance with your demand notice.

It is important that we collect the Council Tax as promptly as possible. This in turn helps keep the Council Tax as low as possible for all residents of the Borough.

It is important to note that even though you may have paid at the bank, Post Office or sent payment by post, until that payment is received, the amount remains unpaid. Generally it takes four working days for payments to reach us through the bank and seven working days through the post office.

We deal with 65,000 Council Taxpayers and therefore it is not possible to check each final notice before issue.

Why is a final notice important?

Once a final notice has been sent payment of the **full balance** must be received on your Council Tax account within seven days. It is important that this is done to avoid a summons being issued.

Non compliance with a final notice will result in a Summons being issued and costs being charged.

How do we respond to individual circumstances?

We recognise that it is not always appropriate to enforce full payment immediately if it would cause substantial hardship to do so.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties it is important you contact us to discuss the situation with the aim of making a mutually acceptable arrangement to pay.

If you want to receive independent advice please contact the Citizens Advice Bureau Service at Neville House, 55 Eden Street, Kingston, Surrey, KT1 1BW.

☎ 0870 126 4019 (public enquiry line)

Council Tax Benefit is available to those on low incomes. For further information contact the Benefits office on 020 8547 5001, or write to

Housing Benefits
Royal Borough of Kingston
Guildhall 2
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey
KT1 1EU

If you have difficulty reading this document because of a disability or because English is not your first language, we can help you. Please call 020 8547 5000 or ask someone to call on your behalf.

Summons and beyond: what this means to you

If you have not complied with the final notice or have not contacted us to make an arrangement to pay, a Summons will be issued. A Summons is a legal notice requiring you to appear at the Magistrates Court if you have a dispute against liability*. Costs will be incurred on the issue of a Summons.

*Please notify the Council Tax Section of any issues as we will try to resolve these.

The Council will request a Liability Order at the hearing and you will be notified of this within a week (provided you have not previously made an arrangement to pay). Further costs (see later) will be incurred with the granting of a Liability Order. Once a Liability Order has been granted and provided you have not entered into an arrangement to pay, the Council has the right to determine the next stage of enforcement from the following: Attachment of Earnings; Attachment of Benefit; Bailiff action; Bankruptcy and Charging Order.

The following gives you an indication of the costs you would incur if recovery action continued beyond the final notice stage:

Breakdown of Costs

Summons	£108
Liability Order	£15
Bailiffs Fees	
1 st Levy	£24.50
2 nd Levy	£18.00
Each van call (in excess of)	£117.50

How to contact us

Council Tax Office
Royal Borough of Kingston
Guildhall 2
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey
KT1 1EU
☎020 8547 5007
Fax: 020 8547 5648
e-mail: council.tax@rbk.kingston.gov.uk
Website: www.kingston.gov.uk

The Information and Advice Centre is open to personal callers from 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Telephone lines are open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

Complaint Procedure

We are committed to delivering services that are excellent value for money and to providing the best possible service in a friendly and courteous manner. We realise that we do not always meet your expectations and things may go wrong. We see your complaint as a chance to put things right and improve how we do things in the future.

A complaint can be about the way we did something, failing to do something we should have done, doing something we should not have done, and can be from any person affected by a decision that the Council has made.

If you have a complaint you can phone, write, e-mail or call into the Council Tax office. Your complaint will be dealt with by a senior officer. You may expect your complaint to be dealt with within ten working days, unless it requires further investigation, in which case we will acknowledge it and tell you when you can expect a reply.

The Council has no power to write off the Council Tax liability on the grounds of financial hardship.

For **independent** advice on debt problems:

Citizens Advice Bureau

www.adviceguide.org.uk
Neville House
55 Eden Street
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey KT1 1BW

0870 126 4019

Consumer Credit Counselling

www.cccs.co.uk 0800 138 1111

National Debtline

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk 0800 804 4000